

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to amendments/arguments filed 2/28/2008. Currently claims 1-20 are pending in the instant application.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Specification

The amendments to the specification were received 2/28/2008. These amendments are acceptable and have been entered.

Drawings

The drawings were received on 2/28/2008. These drawings are sufficient for examination.

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: 25. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing

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date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either “Replacement Sheet” or “New Sheet” pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hansen et al. (US Patent 5,714,225). Hansen discloses a patch (fig. 1) comprising a backing layer (1) and a layer of skin-friendly adhesive (col. 2, lines 61-63), having a first area (fig. 1) defined by an outer border, a second area (fig. 1) surrounding the first area (fig. 1) and separated therefrom by the first area border (fig. 1), a third area (fig. 1) bounded by a rim of the patch and surrounding the second area (fig. 2), and an inner border (2) to define a substantially annular area therebetween. A pattern of curvilinear indentations (2) covers the first and third areas (fig. 1). The curvilinear indentations (2) are a pattern because the user may have as many indentations in the patch (fig. 1) as desired by the user (col. 10, line 45). The first area (fig. 1) includes a central hole (3) and a set of indentations (2) encircling the central hole (3). The indentations (2) are in the form of grooves having a level bottom (fig. 2). The indentations (2) are defined by

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mathematical function of second order, which is the function of a circle. A bag or a coupling device (col. 9, lines 55-57) is fully capable of being attached to the second area (fig. 1) surrounding the first area (fig. 1). The inner border of the third area (fig. 1) is fully capable of being the same thickness as the outer border of the first area (fig. 1). The indentations (2b) are fully capable of being two thirds (fig. 3) the thickness of the total thickness of the patch (fig. 1).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 3, 5, 8, and 10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansen et al. (US Patent 5,714,225) in view of Samuelsen (US Patent 5,486,158). Hansen substantially discloses the claimed invention; see rejection to claims 1 and 2 above. Hansen fails to disclose the radial indentations and intersecting indentations. However, Samuelsen discloses a patch (fig. 4) comprising radial indentations (2) and curvilinear indentations (3) intersecting the

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radial indentations. Therefore, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Hansen device with radial indentations in the first and third areas in order to increase the flexibility of the patch. The radial indentation in the third would obviously be able to intersect the rim of the patch and make an angle less than 90 degrees, which also would extend the pattern to the rim of the patch.

Hansen/Samuelsen fail to explicitly state the first and third areas have different patterns of indentations. However, Applicant provides no criticality to the patterns of the two area being different because it solves no specifically stated problem and provides no unforeseen advantage; therefore, the different patterns are merely a design choice. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention for the Hansen/Samuelsen patch to have different indentations patterns in the first and third areas, since it has been held that a change in form or shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art, absent any showing of unexpected results. *In re Dailey et al.*, 149 USPQ 47.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to BRANDON JACKSON whose telephone number is (571)272-3414. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patricia Bianco can be reached on (571)272-4940. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Brandon Jackson/
Examiner, Art Unit 3772

BLJ

/Patricia Bianco/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3772

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